

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

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Date of transcription June 8, 1981

John (Jack) Warnock Hinckley, Sr. was interviewed in the Office of the United States Attorney (USA), Charles F. C. Ruff, United States District Court House, Washington, D. C. Present during this interview were Attorney [redacted] Law Firm of Williams and Connolly, a male representative from his office alone with USA Ruff Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA) [redacted] and [redacted] Stenographer, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Hinckley was advised that the nature of this interview would be concerning his son John's travel, associates, medication, treatment, and the last time he either spoke with or saw John. Thereafter, Jack Hinckley furnished the following information:

Jack Hinckley recalled that he had contact with John the night before John left for California, which he believes was a Tuesday night, perhaps the 24th of March, 1981. This contact involved a long talk that night on the phone, at least 30 minutes. In this conversation with John, Jack Hinckley tried to talk him out of going. Under doctor's instructions, Jack Hinckley commented that he and his wife were trying to help John become self-sufficient, even to the point of forcing John to be self-sufficient by applying pressure on him for weeks. He had told John that by the end of the preceding month he would either be self-sufficient or go on welfare, because Jack Hinckley and his wife were going to "cut him off" from funds. As Jack Hinckley understood from John, John only had a small amount of money left, around \$100, and had no job. Jack had hoped to convince his son to stay in Colorado and get a job, however, John was determined to go to California with his friends and have a "lousy" job, rather than stay in Denver with a "lousy" job and no friends. During the course of the conversation, John had difficulty deciding whether to fly or drive. John seemed to dismiss the idea of driving because his car was old and he did not like the prospect of breaking down in the desert. The conversation ended with Jack Hinckley trying to convince his son to stay in Denver. The next morning his wife took John to the airport. After this time, Jack Hinckley said he never saw or talked to John.

Jack Hinckley continued that to his knowledge John only had one friend in California and that was [redacted]

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Investigation on 5/27/81 at Washington, D. C. File # WFO 175-311

SA [redacted]
by SA [redacted] GGC/HER:pk Date dictated 6/2/81

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He further advised that his wife was very distraught and angry with herself especially with the prospect of having to cut John off totally knowing that John was going through an extremely difficult period and not knowing how he could manage. [redacted] took John to the airport, which is a 35 mile trip; however, she related to Jack Hinckley that nothing was said between them on the way to the airport. When they arrived, John got out of the car and [redacted] gave John some money from her purse about \$100-\$120. She related to Jack that she felt guilty about this, because it was strictly against the doctor's orders.

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Hinckley was again asked who and where in California his son may have gone to see, and he replied that the only other person that comes to mind is a girlfriend named [redacted] but he did not know her last name. Perhaps [redacted] would recall more about this girl, but usually he did not pay much attention to talk about girlfriends.

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In mid-January, Jack Hinckley and his wife were in California during the Inauguration and homecoming of the hostages. He remembers being gone the first few days of February, also, and as he recalls John was gone part of that time. John had a job lined up to begin on February 23rd. When Hinckley returned home after his early February trip, he recalls that John wanted to leave for a few days and took off. Hinckley remembers thinking that John had gone to Lubbock, because he had taken his car. John showed up at the front door in a week or so and when Jack inquired about how the car drove, John replied that it did fine, except coming up the mountain, which indicated to Jack later that John had not gone to Lubbock.

At this point [redacted] interjected in order to establish the proper time frame that around the middle of February, 12-13th, John was in New Haven after Jack [redacted] Hinckley had come back from the West Coast.

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Jack Hinckley continued that through the first few days of February, John was in Evergreen and about the 5th or 6th of February John wanted to "take off" before his February 23rd job. He was opposed to John's leaving, but claimed it was just as well since they were getting on each other's nerves. John left and Hinckley thought he had gone to Lubbock. He believes the date was Monday, the 23rd, because on Wednesday, the 25th, he had to go out of town for a board meeting and then returned on Sunday, the first. Upon Hinckley's return, John was gone again leaving a note at the top of the stairs to the effect that he was "off again."

Regarding the job, Mr. Hinckley related that it was another losing experience for John. The job was at a weekly newspaper in a suburb of Denver; however, when John showed up for work, instead of writing or doing work on editorials, they put him to work in a warehouse. Hinckley advised that John was dressed up in his best clothes and they (the newspaper) put him to work in a warehouse to move newspapers. Consequently, John was very upset. Hinckley does not recall whether they paid John or whether he even finished out the week with the newspaper. As on previous occasions when John could not hold a job or stay in school, here was another time when he could not cope, and the doctor had given orders that the Hinckleys were to force him to cope.

Hinckley recalls that there was a second trip in March, and that time John had called a few days later from New York to say that he was broke and wanted to come home. Because of prior discussions with the doctor, who had advised that if John contacted them, they were to make John "hurt" by refusing to help him, thereby allowing John the opportunity to get control of the situation. Therefore, when John called at 5:00 a.m. in the morning, which Hinckley believes was a Friday, saying that he was broke and wanted to come home, Jack Hinckley told his son to call back in the afternoon. Hinckley described John as sounding groggy and he could hardly talk. Approximately 30 minutes later, John called again sounding better and saying that he had gone out and drank a Coke. This time he sounded a little more coherent. Again, Hinckley asked John to call him in the afternoon. After speaking to John, Jack and

[redacted] Hinckley discussed the conversation he had had with John, and both concurred that they did not want to leave him in New York City. Therefore, when he arrived at his office, Jack Hinckley obtained a plane ticket from the Newark airport for Saturday, not Friday. In the meantime, John called collect four or five different times and talked to his mother. When Hinckley spoke to John later, John desired to come home that same day, Friday, while Hinckley tried to convince him to come home the next day. On Saturday, John called again and wanted to know, "What's the deal?", to which Jack Hinckley replied that there would be a plane ticket waiting at the airport. John responded that he did not have any money to get to the airport, and Hinckley told him he did not care whether he went to a policeman, traveler's aid or the Salvation Army, John would have to find his own way to the airport. About an hour later, John called back very distraught, saying that he could not get to the airport and had no money. Consequently, Hinckley called one of the directors of his company who lives on Manhattan Island, [redacted] and asked him to loan John enough money to get to the airport. Hinckley believes [redacted] gave John about \$35, which he used to get a hamburger and bus to the airport. John was to call when he arrived in

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Denver. He did so, and Hinckley went out to the airport alone to pick up John. After meeting John, they went to an empty waiting area and sat down and Hinckley gave John a lecture about how much trouble he was causing. Afterwards, he took John to where John's car was parked and without difficulty, the car started. Hinckley then gave John about \$210 from his billfold and said, "This is the last money you're going to get from us." He also told John that he could not come home and that he would have to find a room somewhere. That was the last time that he saw John, which was Saturday night at the airport.

Jack Hinckley related that his son's reaction to this was shock, even though they had been talking for weeks about long-range plans to have him become self-sufficient. Of course, at that time they did not realize that this was probably the worst thing they could have been doing, that is, bringing added pressures to bear on his very troubled mind. Jack Hinckley further commented that John never reacted to anything. In fact, he said that their relationship had been strange for years and that John had never shown any emotions around him. Even though John acted surprised, he never said anything or tried to argue. Hinckley added that he even suggested that John get a room at the YMCA.

At this point, reference was again made to the note left by John at the top of the stairs, and Jack Hinckley advised that it said something to the effect, "Your prodigal son is gone again. I've got to go exorcise some demons or demon." Jack's wife also saw the note, but Jack does not believe that they still have the note.

Hinckley was questioned regarding when John first saw the doctor, the basis for referral to the doctor, the names of the doctor or doctors and the general background concerning John's association with the doctors, and he advised that John began seeing doctors way back in 1977 at Tech in Lubbock. Hinckley related that for the past five to seven years John has been complaining about various physical problems, one complaint after another, almost any problem one could think of, and there was a long list of doctor's visits in 1978.

Hinckley related that John had psychosomatic problems long ago, problems that, of course, were real to John. These problems affected his school work and his ability to communicate and so forth. There were many times that he was diagnosed by one of the doctors at Tech as being "under severe stress," even as recently as 1981, and the latest time being when he was looking for a job. John claimed that when he stood up for any length of

time, his legs would bother him. Hinckley recalled a specific time when his wife, [redacted] was out in a shopping center and John claimed that his legs were "killing" him.

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Hinckley advised that because of his concern for John's physical problems, he brought him back to Evergreen about the middle or spring of 1980, and had John undergo numerous physicals. After these examinations, John commented that he thought it was in his head. Subsequently, around mid-summer 1980, Hinckley asked John to see the company psychiatrist, [redacted], an individual whom the company utilized for industrial psychology work. John saw [redacted] two times during the summer of 1980. Then when John returned from a trip the end of October, the three of them (Mr. and Mrs. Hinckley and John) decided John should see a doctor named [redacted] in Evergreen.

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Hinckley claimed that he did not put any kind of pressure on John for him to see the doctors at any time. He said that one of the things that [redacted] had tried to develop for John was a long-range plan to help John become self-sufficient and had made an agreement with John to that effect.

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John said he had heard of writer workshop courses, weekly courses, at Yale University and would like to go back and take three or four courses. Around that time following [redacted] recommendation, they would sell some stock John owned and for the first time in his life John would have some control. Hinckley would see what John did with it. John seemed enthused about attending the workshop and would have a month or so before it began and he might meet somebody there that could help him sell his manuscript in New York. If by January, he had not done so, then he could go back to school and would have \$1200 set aside for that. Hinckley said his son would keep the money in Lubbock and further related that he had given John \$500 before the proceeds of the stock were available. Then John would repay that money out of the stock proceeds. As far as Hinckley knew, John went up to New Haven while Mr. Hinckley was out of town on business and apparently John just stayed two or three days and returned to Evergreen and then had told his mother that he had to go to Lubbock for "unfinished business." As Hinckley learned later, John went from Lubbock to New Haven. According to Hinckley, all this running around started when long-range plans for John were made to make him self-sufficient.

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Hinckley was queried as to whether he had ever offered John a position with Vanderbilt and whether there was actually a position which John could have filled. To this Hinckley responded that John would not have taken a job if one had been offered him, and anyway Hinckley would not have offered John a job because of John's attitude. Hinckley did not offer [redacted] a job until he

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had worked with another company for years. By "attitude" Hinckley related that his son had never held a job in his life.

Upon being asked, Hinckley stated that at no time has he ever known his son to take any "drugs," except those that have been prescribed for him, like Valium which was prescribed by [redacted] in Lubbock, and this again was for "stress reaction--tension."

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When asked if John ever had any credit cards or other financial options at his disposal, Hinckley replied that John had no credit cards in his own name. He further added that even though John had stock in his own name, he had no access to that stock since it was maintained in a safe deposit box and therefore Hinckley retained physical control of the stock. According to Hinckley, John had access to [redacted] Conoco Credit card.

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In 1973 or 1974, probably 1974, John's brother gave him a car and that was the first indication that something was not consistent in his behavior, because he sold the car and took off for California. Ever since that time, they never gave John anything other than money.

While at Tech, John was afforded a \$350 monthly allowance, and then when John came home, of course, they only gave him periodic spending money, and that was very little.

When asked if John had any specific duties or chores to do around the house when he was at home in Evergreen, Hinckley responded that John helped [redacted] by taking out trash, and other similar household chores. But generally it was very difficult to get John to do anything. When asked if this type of behavior on John's part extended back to high school days, Hinckley replied that he did not recall back to high school days, but when he was living in Evergreen he created a lot of tension for everybody, especially since he was very depressed. This tension was created from the fact that John did not have a job and Hinckley could not understand why he did not get a job. For a long time John insisted on staying in school, but it was obvious he could not cope. John would be on the phone saying he would have to drop courses. It was evident by looking at John's record and seeing that he gave up, could not stay in school and could not get a job and become self-sufficient. John wanted to stay at the house, but life was very tense for everyone.

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It's clear now that it would have been a lot easier to have gone ahead and supported John and given him an allowance and that would have avoided all the consequences. But they believed they were doing the right thing, following the doctor's orders in trying to help John become self-sufficient, but unfortunately none of them knew how disturbed John was.

Bringing more and more pressure on John just compounded the situation. When asked if the doctors had told them not to apply pressure on John, Hinckley replied that to the contrary the doctors had encouraged them to bring about more pressure to the point that John would "hurt." The doctors wanted them to "put him through the ringer," to make him realize he could be self-sufficient. Both Hinckley and his wife were concerned over John committing suicide and never dreamed that John would hurt anyone else. Hinckley explained that [redacted] claimed that John did not have any suicidal tendencies and did not have any thoughts that John would hurt someone else. Since there was no danger of suicide, then the doctor felt that this course of action must be followed. Whenever Hinckley felt it was reaching the point of committing John to an institution, [redacted] talked them out of that. However, sometime last fall, in late October, Hinckley talked to an institution in Arizona about committing John. It was in Wickenburg, called "The Meadows." Hinckley spoke to the head of the institution, because a friend of his in Dallas had gone there for alcoholism. The friend mentioned to Hinckley that if they could get John out there probably they could help him. The friend called the head of the hospital and he in turn called Jack. That night the three of them (Mr. and Mrs. Hinckley and John) talked about it, and in early November they told [redacted] who said they would consider it. Then the next night [redacted] told John to "forget it." Because of all of this, John was very confused and this went on for several months and then in February or early March they went through this again. Hinckley had his secretary check to see if they could find a Christian type facility, and came up with the name of "The Meadows" again. Thereafter, he put a note in his desk drawer and he assumes it is still there. Once again [redacted] talked him out of it. The reason was that one of the main concerns was John taking Valium. [redacted] said he could get John off Valium in 30 days, and if not in 30 days, then they would proceed with bringing a lot of pressure to bear on John. However, Hinckley sees this now as the worst thing that could have been done.

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Regarding any contact Hinckley may have had with his son between March 7th and 23rd, he related that John liked to call [redacted] during that time when Jack was not home. Usually [redacted] would tell Jack what their conversations involved. When he was looking for a job in one case after another nothing seemed to "pan out" for John and it wasn't until ten days or more later that he realized [redacted] knew where John was staying and just about that time as John was about to move out of the Golden Hours, Jack Hinckley found out he was there. One night when Hinckley was in town, he went to that part of town where John was staying to see him only to learn that he had just left. The last night or two in Denver, John had moved to another motel down the street.

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Regarding previous discussion of California, again Hinckley reiterated that he was trying to talk John out of going. Again, he related that John had told him about having a "lousy" job but being with his friends. When asked if he knew where in California John had gone, Hinckley related that he believed it was somewhere in the Los Angeles area, a place John had gone before--Hollywood, but he did not know who, nor did he have a telephone number. John did not send any mail from California, although he usually called as was the norm over the years, once a week on Sunday night. They were in touch with John most of the time, at least as long as he was in school. There were a few times that he would take off and they would not hear from him. During his first trip to California in 1976, there was a two to three week period that they did not hear from him, but he sent a Mother's Day card and shortly thereafter called to say he had been robbed. Hinckley was asked if this was around the time that John had sold [redacted] car and he responded that John's voice had been groggy and incoherent and was not able to say much at all. Hinckley had never known his son to take drugs or alcohol and did not even drink beer.

After being introduced to [redacted] in the fall of 1980, normally John would visit [redacted] twice a week, and this went on through February, to the end of February. At some point in November, John went away and came back December 1st, when [redacted] was home and Hinckley was away on business, when Hinckley returned, John had already departed the day before Hinckley arrived.

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Then in mid-December John came home for the holidays. When asked about previous discussion concerning John Lennon, Hinckley replied that now he remembered that John was gone. According to Hinckley, the story he and the family had gotten was that John had gone to Lubbock with [redacted] had wanted John to help him drive to Virginia, where he had to pick up a car. Then John went up to Washington, D. C. and while there

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Lennon was killed, and subsequently John traveled to New York and spent the night in Central Park. While in New York, John went to Lennon's apartment and when he came home from that trip, Hinckley stated that he had never seen John so devastated, worse than if Jack Hinckley had been killed himself. Hinckley recalls that one of the first remarks that John made was, "Don't make any cracks about John Lennon. I'm deeply depressed." John just sat staring out the window for long periods of time; no words were spoken, nothing. John appeared to be completely shattered by Lennon's death.

When asked whether he knew where John was the rest of the time in November and December, Hinckley replied that he did not. He related that John did tell them he was in New York at Lennon's funeral and then he called from New York and [redacted] had taken the call. She had related to Hinckley that John's voice was trembling and broken up and that he wanted to come home and would that be alright. Before that trip to New York, John was gone about the last two to three weeks of November and perhaps most of November as Hinckley recalls.

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Using Christmas as a point of reference, Hinckley was asked if after the holidays around January 10th that he had taken [redacted] on a trip and stayed through early February. Hinckley responded that their trip after Christmas had lasted about two weeks and then they were home for a few days and then he went on another four to five day trip in February.

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Hinckley recalls that during the time when the hostages were released, January 27th, he was in Evergreen. For the first five days of February John was at the house. Hinckley was questioned as to his whereabouts on Inauguration Day, to which he replied he watched the Inauguration from California and to his knowledge John was in Colorado; however, he does not specifically recall speaking to him. Hinckley explained that John was very pleased about Reagan's Inauguration and election. Hinckley specifically recalls that this was true because it was one of the few things that he and John agreed upon. When queried about John possibly being in Washington, D. C. during the Inauguration, Hinckley replied that he did not believe so. Furthermore, Hinckley supposed that John was in Evergreen when the hostages were released, January 27th.

When asked whether between Christmas and March if Hinckley recalled ever spending time outside the house with John, Hinckley replied that they went for walks, especially upon the recommendation of [redacted] had wanted John to take walks and keep a diary of his feelings. Hinckley related that the FBI took the diary John was keeping. He further advised that he had tried to get John to go for walks, but John would complain on the walk that his legs were hurting and would have to stop every so often.

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John did not have contact with any friends during the holidays and did not like to go out and socialize with family friends and really had no friends of his own. Hinckley remarked that John did not even like to go out to dinner with him and [redacted] John's room was downstairs and he liked to be alone to write, read and play his guitar and did not like to be interrupted.

John had told Hinckley that he had written a mystery novel and had sent it off to several publishers. John had tried to sell his novel and that was the reason for some of his trips. This was during the Christmas holidays of 1979, and John had told them that he was going to Shreveport to meet [redacted] whose grandmother had died. They (John and [redacted]) were going to drive from Shreveport to New York and spend Christmas with [redacted] and while there John was going to call on publishing houses.

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When asked if there were any more writings of John's around the house or were they located in John's room when it was searched, Hinckley responded that most of them were found in the garage at about 2:30 in the morning when seven guys (FBI agents) had gone through everything in the garage. Jack Hinckley stated that he just went through after they had gone through and found things that they had left, but that was only because they were in boxes that did not appear to contain papers.

Hinckley confirmed that in the early part of February John was in Denver area looking for a job, and had found one which was to begin the 23rd. Before this job, John had one at the Lakewood Sentinel. John also took off prior to the 23rd and Hinckley had assumed that John had gone to Lubbock because he had taken his car, a Plymouth Volare. When he next heard from John, it was a week later when John appeared on the doorstep at eight o'clock with a sheepish grin on his face. By this time he and his wife had spoken with [redacted] and [redacted] had told them not to let John into the house. Because it was late at night, they let John in. Hinckley believes that it was this occasion that the next morning when they talked, John related that it would just upset them to know where he had been. Hinckley recalls that John then stayed at their home until he began his job on the 23rd.

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When he got home from his job, dressed in his coat and tie, John had told them it wasn't at all like he had been told it would be. The job was in a warehouse and John did not feel up to it. His legs were bothering him, and he was mad because they did not live up to their end of the bargain. Hinckley said he tried to cheer John up. On the second day, John also wore dark dress pants and when Hinckley saw him later with dirt and dust on his clothes, assumed he had gone to work. On the third day, however, Hinckley had gone out of town, so he does not know whether John finished the week out or not. When [redacted] was informed about the job situation he told John he would have to stick with it.

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After John had called from New York on one Friday morning and wanted to come home, they had called [redacted] during the day and [redacted] suggested that they leave John in New York and send him \$100 and say "that's it." [redacted] looked at all the running around the country John did as positive in that it showed that John knew how to get along and get by. They did not know how John was getting money and [redacted] said not to worry. Hinckley said that he could tell that John was spending more than was being provided by them. While John was in school he was allotted \$350 per month, but in the fall of 1980, Hinckley does not know how much money John possessed. John did not have a savings account and never really required much money. John seemed to be satisfied with practically nothing, just so long as he was left alone; without pressure of school or work, he was content. Money was never a problem with John.

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Hinckley was asked whether he was aware that in the spring of 1980 (April and May) that John had spent this time in Dallas living in an apartment by himself, to which Jack Hinckley had responded that he could not relate to that specific time period. However, Jack Hinckley did know that according to John he was working for the Dallas Morning News and was telling them, as was typical of every working experience that he had had that he had started out on his own and had gotten the job on his own. It was supposedly a clip-and-paste type job, with daylight hours, but the hours, according to John, had been shortened or the work changed or shifted to night work. As usual and typical of every story, John had excuses. During this period of time John still called home weekly. While in the Dallas area, [redacted] was supposed to check in on him periodically.

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According to Jack Hinckley, he did not know anyone at the Dallas Morning News that John could have contacted, nor did he ever visit John while John was in Dallas for this period of time.

Hinckley related that John had stock in his own name, and up until 50% of the stock split, it was somewhere around 40,000 shares. This was given to each of the children over a period of years. Now since the split John has around 60,000 shares, but John is not aware of this.

When John wanted to cash in 350 shares of stock, Jack Hinckley believes John thought it would be a means of getting his hands on some cash. Accordingly, John called the stock broker who handled his first transaction. During this time, however Hinckley was out of town; therefore, the broker called [redacted] and [redacted] said no. Prior to this time, Hinckley advised that he and John just never really talked about money.

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As far as Jack Hinckley knows, John did not have a passport and therefore, did not travel outside the country.

Jack Hinckley averred that until March 30, 1981, he had never heard of Jodie Foster, or the movie "Taxi"; however, he felt that perhaps [redacted] did. Additionally, Hinckley stated that he did not go to the movies with John, and did not go to the movies much, if at all.

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Regarding John's political thinking, Jack Hinckley advised that he knew his son favored President Reagan, but did not think President Jimmy Carter was a very good President. Hinckley further commented that John did not ever express such hatred for Carter by saying he would kill him, but just said he did not think Carter was very "bright." In a normal frame of mind, which John was from time to time, they did talk about some politics, religion and sports.

Hinckley was aware that John had read 17 books in a four-month period and looking at that list, John was interested in many different subjects, and music entertainment personalities.

According to Hinckley, John was associated in early 1979 with the American Front, some sort of Nazi organization on campus at Tech, but Hinckley wrote John to forget it. To his knowledge, John was never a member of the Nazi Party nor was he ever in a parade, but probably might have had correspondence with Nazi related organizations.

Hinckley claimed that he did not know Bush (the Vice President), nor was any member of his family associated with Bush, other than the contact that [redacted] had had.

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Hinckley was not aware that John was in Washington, D. C. in March, but rather thought he was in California. He does not know how John ended up in Washington, D. C., except that John decided to leave California and travel to Denver, the cost by bus being \$115, while for \$117 he could travel to the East Coast, so that's how he ended up in Washington, D. C.

Periodically John would call [redacted] and talk to him when he was home, but Hinckley is almost sure that John did not speak to [redacted] while John was out of town. John liked [redacted] but did not feel [redacted] was helping him. Walks they took were to help stress reduction. Regarding biofeedbacks, John did not feel that they were helping. Towards the end of February or March, John became very depressed at the lack of help he received during his sessions with [redacted]

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